

Parameters of a “Good” Professional Experience: Employer Perspective

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Introduction

- Long-term viability of WIL requires mutual value creation (Fleming & Hickey, 2013)
- Research on students' perspectives is well represented in the current WIL literature (e.g., Drewery et al., 2016; Hurst, Good, & Gardner, 2012)
- Research on hosts' perspectives more limited, focuses on perspectives of supervisors' roles (e., Fleming, 2015; Winchester-Seeto, Rowe, & Mackaway, 2016)



Research Gaps

- We know less about hosts' views towards their WIL students (Pretti, Drewery, & Nevison, 2016)
- Recruiters' perspectives essentially overlooked, but may be different from others stakeholders' views (Rowe, 2014; see also Barr & McNeilly, 2002, *Journal of Marketing Education*)
- Empirical inter-institutional research is sparse, yet important for generalization and comparison



Hosts' Perspectives: So What?

- Examining hosts' perspectives towards students provides insight into motivations and expectations of important organizational members
- Supervisors' motives and expectations important for sustained success of WIL
- Recruiters' perspectives may have implications for student employment and experience



Present Investigation

This study seeks to examine host organization members' perspectives towards WIL. Specifically:

Q1: What do hosts believe students are in the organization to do?

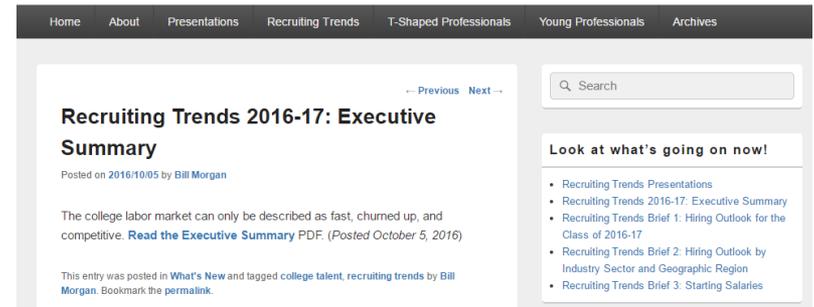
Q2: How do hosts define successful work terms?



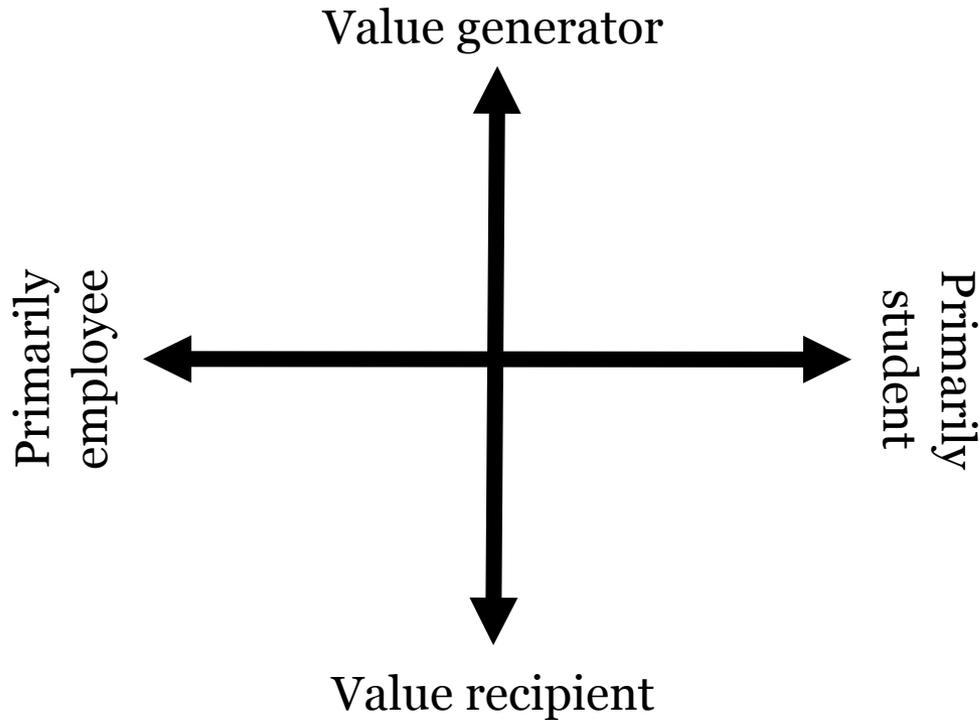
Data and Participants

Two online surveys:

1. WatCACE survey of supervisors' perspectives, ($n = 374$)
2. CERI recruitment trends survey (sub-sample $n = 1191$)



Measure of Perspectives re: Students' Roles



Example Items

I see my students as... 1 = an employee first and a student second, 6 = a student first and an employee second

I expect my [WIL] student to... 1 = give the organization as much as they get back, 6 = get from the organization more than they give



Measure of Perspectives re: Success Criteria

Participants ranked importance (1 = most important, 10 = least important)

Student-focused criteria (e.g., The student learns from the experience; The student is genuinely interested in the work/organization)

Organization-focused criteria (e.g., The company's profit rises due to the student's presence/actions; The student completes work that would otherwise not be completed)

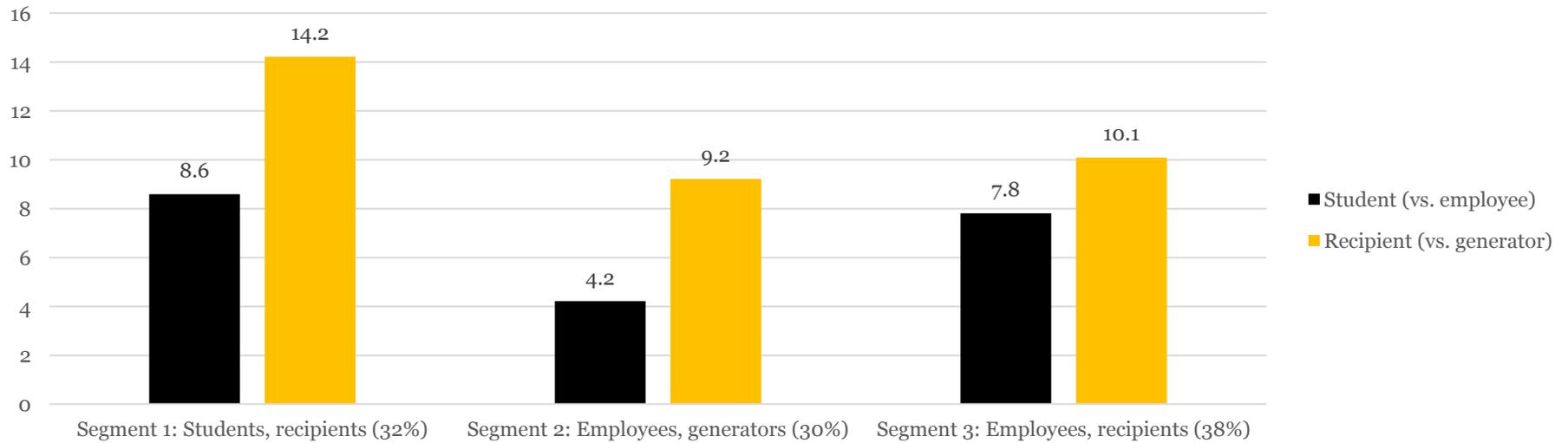
Supervisor-focused criteria (e.g., [My/supervisor's] personal burden of work is lowered; “The student does not need much training”)



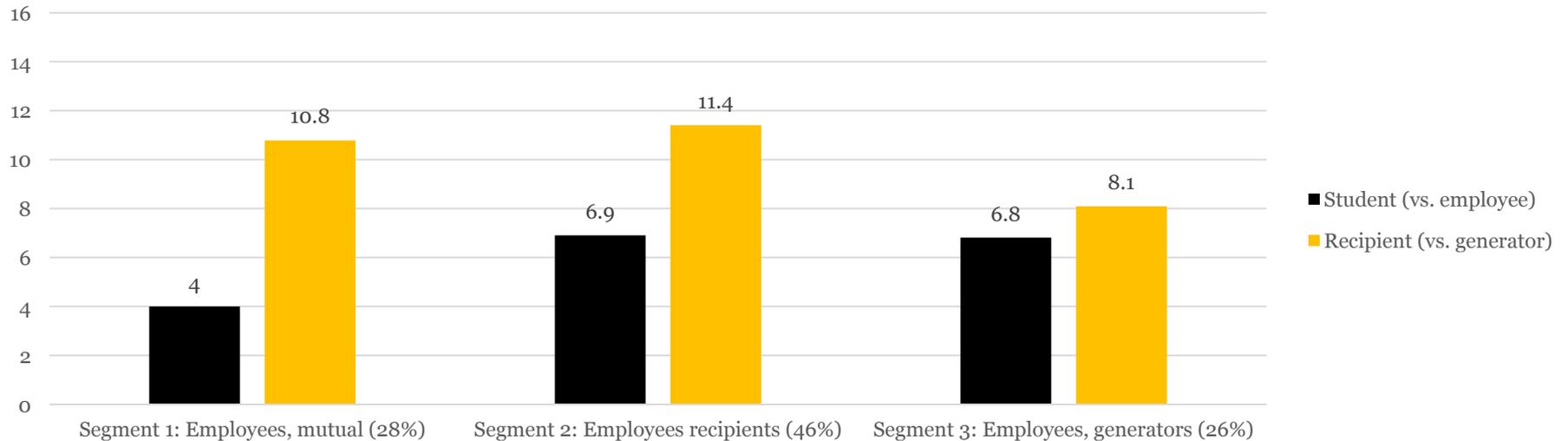
Results Part 1: Hosts' Perspectives



Supervisors' Perspectives



Recruiters' Perspectives



Highlights

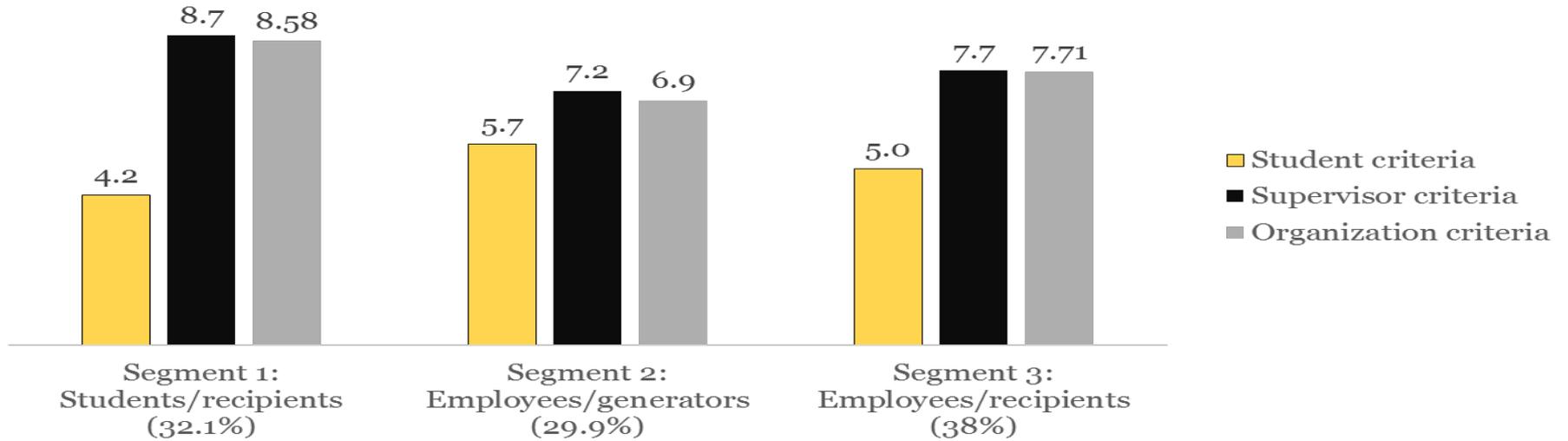
- Notably: three segments for both groups
- Supervisors relative to recruiters **see students more so as students**, $t(1702) = 8.35$, $p < .001$, and also **see students more so as recipients of value**, $t(1709) = 5.98$, $p < .001$.
- All three recruiter segments tend to view students primarily as *employees*



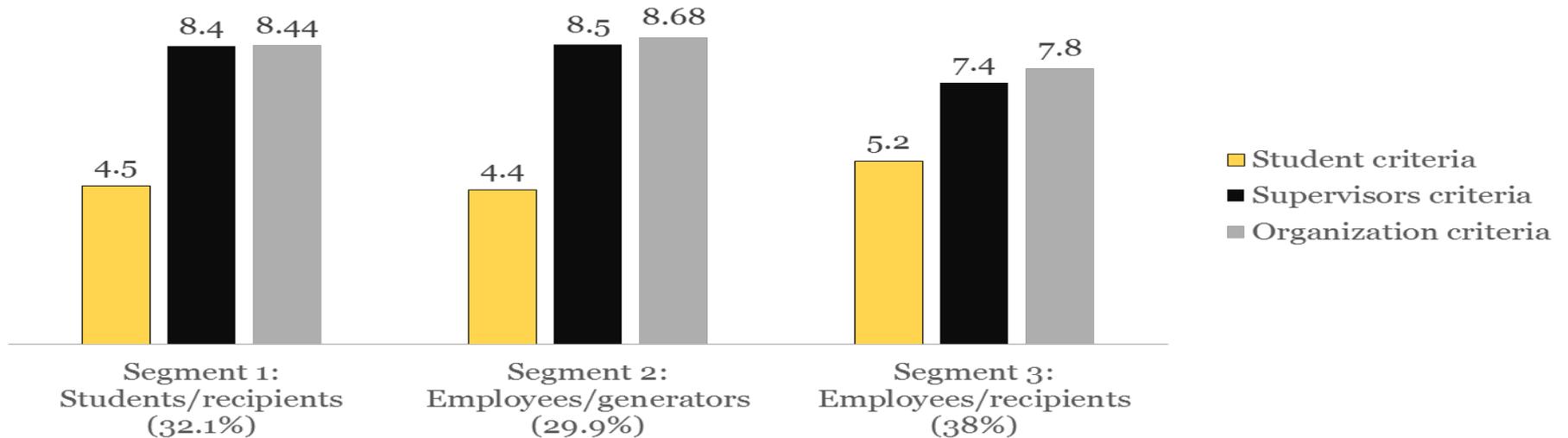
Results Part 2: Defining Success



Supervisors



Recruiters



Highlights

- Consistent across segments and between supervisors and recruiters, student-focused criteria are ranked as being **most important**, with little difference between organizational and supervisor-focused criteria
- Recruiters tend to rank supervisor-focused criteria as being **slightly more important** than organization-focused criteria



Discussion

- Q1: What are students in the organization to do?
 - There is a **diversity of perspectives** amongst hosts (some see students as “students” while others see them as “employees”)
 - Recruiters may be thinking of hiring an “employee” while supervisors believe they are working with “students” (though the **difference is not very pronounced**)
 - Still, most agree that there should be **mutual value** between students and organizations
- Q2: What does success look like?
 - Regardless of position (supervisor and recruiter) and views towards students’ roles, hosts agree that students’ success **must come first**



Conclusions

- Organizations may be prioritizing student outcomes as a **good business policy** → it may create commitment (Pennaforde & Pretti, 2015) and conversion (Hurst et al., 2012) and may contribute to students' performance (Drewery et al., 2016; Drewery, Pretti, & Barclay, 2016)
- Additional research is required
 - Future research could look at perspectives of host groups within the same organization
 - How are these perspectives formed and how do they influence selection and supervision in WIL?



Thank You

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